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18 SEP 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Comptroller

SUBJECT : A Proposal for the Establishment of a Central Office at Headquarters for Processing Travel Vouchers Chargeable to Confidential Funds

I. This memorandum contains a recommendation for approval in paragraph VII.

II. PROBLEM

To determine the feasibility of establishing a central travel claims office at Headquarters for the purpose of assisting returning PCS employees and TDY overseas travelers in the preparation of their confidential funds travel vouchers and for the typing, auditing, and certifying of such vouchers for payment or for credit to the travelers' advance accounts.

III. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Current procedures for processing PCS and TDY travel vouchers at Headquarters for employees traveling on confidential funds result in excessive utilization of manpower and time because of duplication of effort in the travelers' components of assignment and in the Finance Division, Office of the Comptroller. Centralization of certain functions should result in a savings of manpower, time, and paperwork.

2. A central travel claims office for processing travel claims may now be feasible because most of the Agency's components which sponsor overseas travelers are located in the new Headquarters Building. A central travel claims office should result in a savings in personnel and the centralization of a service of common concern. One of the premises for the construction of the Headquarters Building was to effect economies in personnel and efficiency in operations through the centralization of services of common concern.

3. As most PCS and overseas TDY returnees clear through the Central Processing Branch, Office of Personnel before reporting for duty with their components of assignment, a central travel claims office, if established, should be located contiguous to that Branch.

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4. Centralization of returning PCS and overseas TDY travel voucher processing and related services would provide a single facility to which employees could go for advice and assistance on questions regarding travel.

#### IV. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

1. At the present time, confidential funds travel vouchers for employees returning to Headquarters from PCS and overseas TDY trips are prepared in the travelers' components of assignment. This means that the travel vouchers are typed, examined, and approved by personnel within such components. They are then forwarded to the Finance Division where they are examined, verified and audited prior to being certified for payment or for credit to the travelers' advance accounts. There is, therefore, a duplication of examination and verification of the vouchers.

2. Present practices are the result of the need to meet two requirements:

- a. That a knowledgeable approving officer, appointed under the provisions of [REDACTED] approve the travel voucher for propriety of the travel performed and the claim shown on the voucher.
- b. That the Finance Division certifying officer certify the voucher as being legally proper for payment or for credit.

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3. Many travelers cannot, or will not, prepare their own travel vouchers. They, therefore, require the services of a person capable in the preparation of travel vouchers.

4. Some travel advance accounts become delinquent as a result of the time required to process travel vouchers under the present decentralized system of processing, rather than because of the travelers' delinquency in submitting such vouchers.

#### V. DISCUSSION

1. Travel vouchers involving overseas travel are normally the most difficult and complex to prepare, whereas vouchers involving domestic travel ordinarily are much simpler and less troublesome.

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2. Most travelers returning from overseas are processed through the Central Processing Branch before they report to their components for duty. At this time the facts regarding their return travel are fresh in their minds and they are amenable to "in processing" procedures. Thus, it would be the ideal and practical time to have the travelers prepare their travel vouchers.

3. To eliminate the duplication of effort stated in paragraph IV, 1, above, it is proposed that the traveler, with the assistance of a skilled travel clerk, would complete a travel voucher worksheet and provide the supporting receipts for his claim. On the basis of a preliminary review of the worksheet with the traveler, the traveler would be advised of the approximate amount of his travel voucher for application to his travel advance, and the approximate amount which will be paid to him or he will have to refund to liquidate his advance account. The travel clerk, also, would arrange with the traveler the date and time for him to return to sign the finished travel claim. The clerk would then have a travel voucher typed from the information shown on the worksheet. Upon signature of the finished voucher by the traveler, the voucher would be audited and certified by the chief of the central travel claims office who would be a Finance Division certifying officer. If a refund is due from the traveler, the central travel claims office would obtain cash or the traveler's check for the amount due. If a payment is due the traveler, the payment would be made in cash at the central travel claims office. A copy of the voucher would be transmitted to the employee's component of assignment. This direct method of processing and settling travel vouchers would cut days off the processing time required under the present system.

4. It would not be necessary to send the voucher to the employee's component of assignment for prior approval, providing the concept is accepted that the authorizing officer's signature on the travel order is also an approval of the travel performed providing the travel performed does not deviate significantly from the travel authorized. If this concept is accepted, the travel voucher could be certified and paid without further administrative approval. Should the travel as reported on the voucher contain expenses not previously authorized, operational items of expense, or expenses significantly in excess of those authorized by the travel order it would, of course, be necessary to have the voucher approved by the employee's component, or to have the travel order amended.

5. Accurate data are not readily available on the precise number of overseas returnee PCS and TDY travel vouchers, the number of employees involved in all phases of travel duties, and the time spent on such duties. A review of the Finance Division records for calendar year 1961 indicated, however, that approximately 4.4 man-years were required in processing [REDACTED] PCS and

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25X9A2 [REDACTED] TDI travel vouchers (see TAB 1). Information provided by the geographic DD/P Divisions and the Office of Communications indicated, as detailed on TAB 2, that 14 man-years were required by Budget and Fiscal Section personnel to perform duties related to the travel of approximately 25X9A2 [REDACTED] PCS and 25X9A2 [REDACTED] TDI overseas travel vouchers (see TAB 2). Thus, for the 1961 calendar year this function required the service of approximately 18.4 man-years of the above type employees.

6. In nearly all components the [REDACTED] employees 25X1A who process travel vouchers also perform related activities such as operational accountings, storage claims, reviewing and following up on travel advance accounts, travel briefings, temporary lodging allowance claims, transfer allowance claims, etc. During peak travel periods additional personnel may be added to the [REDACTED]; for example, Far East Division normally has three budget and fiscal employees on travel duties but during peak periods up to six persons may be actually employed on this function. 25X1A

7. On the basis of the information outlined in paragraph 5, above, a savings could be achieved in the manpower and in the processing time by relocating in a central travel claims office the functions of assisting PCS and TDI overseas travelers in the preparation of their vouchers, and of typing, pre-auditing, certifying and settling such travel vouchers. The specific amount of such savings is not determinable; however, without the benefit of actual experience data or knowledge of all the requirements that would be imposed on the central travel claims office, it is estimated that at the outset an office force of thirteen employees (one certifying officer, ten auditors, and two clerk typists) should be able to perform the duties in a timely and effective manner. The approval of a central travel claims office to be manned with thirteen employees should, therefore, permit a savings of 5.4 man-years based on the figures given in paragraph 5, above, assuming that the volume of travel vouchers for the foreseeable future will not change significantly. The establishment of such an office should permit a more effective utilization of [REDACTED] 25X1A personnel in the components.

8. In view of the fact that the special skills in travel voucher preparation and processing have been developed by personnel assigned in the [REDACTED], it is considered appropriate that the components provide ten of the T/O positions and ten individuals to occupy that number of positions for the central travel claims office. TAB 3 lists sixteen positions which have been identified by Budget and Fiscal Officers of the affected components from which ten may be selected for assignment to a central travel claims office. The T/O positions and the individuals for the remaining three positions could be provided by the Finance Division, Office of the Comptroller. 25X1A

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9. As stated in paragraph III, 3, above, the central travel claims office should be located as close as possible to the Central Processing Branch. If the basic premise of establishing the office is accepted, it would be desirable to approach the Medical Staff, which is located adjacent to the Central Processing Branch, to determine whether the necessary space can be made available.

#### **VI. CONCLUSIONS**

1. From the above it appears that the establishment of a central travel claims office would:

- a. Eliminate duplication in processing vouchers.
- b. Expedite the handling of vouchers and reduce the number of delinquent advance accounts.
- c. More effectively utilize manpower.
- d. Provide a service in a central location to returning overseas travelers.

#### **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. A central travel claims office be established as a new Section of the Operations and Liaison Branch, Finance Division, Office of the Comptroller, to process confidential funds travel claims for returning PCS and TDY overseas travelers.

2. An initial staff of thirteen be provided for the central travel claims Section composed of a chief (certifying officer), ten travel claims auditors, and two clerk typists.

3. The staff of the central travel claims Section be adjusted after experience has demonstrated the normal workload requirements, and as necessary thereafter to handle peak period activity and/or new functions assigned.

4. The staff for the travel claims Section be recruited from personnel currently processing vouchers in the area Divisions, Office of Communications, and the Finance Division.

5. Space sufficient to house the central travel claims office be provided as close as possible to the Central Processing Branch.

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6. The concept be accepted that travel vouchers covering travel performed under properly authorized travel orders may be certified for payment or credit without further approval unless the travel voucher reflects an itinerary and/or expenses significantly different from that authorized, expenses not previously authorized, or operational expenses.

  
Acting Chief,  
Technical Accounting Staff

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**CONCUR:**

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Comptroller

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Deputy Director (Support)

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